

KARO-ECHO Meeting

13 May 2019
Arlington Clubhouse

Present

Edward Carney	KM6UBY
Natalie DeJarlais	KM6UCF
Jay Fenton	KJ6WSS
Karen Leong Fenton	KK6ZPM
Howdy Goudey	KE6BEE
Hal Graboske	KK6NDF
Yasmina Haari	
Jon Heda	KC2OKI
Chris Hilliard	
Annette McCoubrey	KJ6SWK
Jerry Michaelis	K6KOP
Larry Nagle	N/A
Diane Richwine	KK6RED
Don Simon	NI6A
Jamuel Starkey	KM6HBO
Mike Stuart	KM6CXI
David Swanson	KJ6AAT
Davis Todhunter	KJ6PPR
Larry Vanselow	KK6GIO

Agenda:

Approval of Past Minutes

Don moved to approved the April 2019 minutes; Howdy seconded; motion carried.

Introduction of New Attendees

Yasmina Haari: A CERT Richmond trainee, Yasmina took the recent Benicia HamCram, where the wrong test was distributed and, as a result, no test-takers were licensed. 90 people in Benicia were affected. She was advised that there is a test-taking opportunity at the conclusion of Ken Fowler's technician class on June 12 at 6:30.

Chris Hilliard, the EC1 CERT area coordinator, also attended.

Recruiting

Jamuel read aloud Chief Janes' email regarding the funding of a mailing. In order to request fire department funding, Kevin wants us to have a focused proposal. We're trying to reach

different communities, including existing and newly licensed hams, as well as prospects from CERT students and graduates. Don, Karen, and Davis agreed to form an outreach committee that will determine the target audience for recruiting and how it will be accomplished so that a proposal can go to Chief Janes.

External antenna access at Clubhouses: Prototype

Howdy showed a prototype of an exterior box that could provide antenna access at the two El Cerrito clubhouses with rooftop antennas: Tassajara and Harding. Due to lack of building access during an emergency, Howdy designed a weather-resistant box with patch cord-ready coax terminators inside, and mentioned that it would be desirable to include FRS/GMRS hookups as well. The cost was approximately \$50-\$60.

Howdy tried to make the box look “uninteresting,” like an electrical box, so that it would attract little attention from vandals and curiosity seekers. He designed it with a combo lock; Don suggested that a sturdier combo lock of hardened steel would make it harder to pry open. Hal suggested that we put a “high voltage” sign on it to discourage curiosity seekers.

The inclusion of power/battery would be possible, but would involve more to be sited at the location.

Jerry mentioned that we could have a key lockbox at the Kensington Community Center as well, with all having the combination that would allow us access to the building key.

GMRS strategy and network building

Hal asked for volunteers to develop a proposal to generate interest in GMRS/FRS communication. Don reminded us that CERT area coordinators need to show interest, but that CERT doesn't have a plan. Mike (EC9), whose drill last year was a great example of the direction we should follow, suggested that we start by focusing on existing CERT areas that have shown interest in GMRS as a starting point for broader adoption: EC9, K6, K2, EC1, and possibly EC5. Mike, Larry N., Hal, and Chris agreed to pull together a plan.

Chris, the new EC1 Coordinator, agreed to coordinate with Don.

Jerry suggested talking to Kevin about a radio class for all the CERT coordinators. Karen pointed out that there is already a GMRS/FRS training scheduled for June 4; Howdy suggested that we simply invite coordinators to that class. Chris noted that the information was delivered to the ACs at the last meeting in person meeting (attended by only 6 ACs).

Larry N. had misunderstood Don's request to distribute the class announcement to the Area Coordinators' mailing list, and agreed to review the request again.

Grant Applications

Larry V. has started a list of grant possibilities, and requested a list of needs to be able to justify funding requests. Do we need improved radios? Antennas?

Hal mentioned that in the Area Coordinator meeting with Grupalo, they discussed a grant for communities to apply for wildfire assistance/preparation. LaMorinda received \$11M for a fire break, of which the El Cerrito Fire Department is hoping to get 25K.

Don has ideas for grants, and asked whether anyone knew of a grant writer who might work with us. Hal requested that anyone with ideas to help Larry with grant applications contact Larry or Hal. Meanwhile, Larry V. and Davis agreed to work with Hal on grants.

Skill Building Workshops

Hal asked whether the group would be interested in a weekend workshop, given the dearth of demonstration time at the meetings. Jamuel suggested the demos first and the business last, but Hal thought we would still be short of time. We did not reach a resolution on this issue.

Training and Demonstrations

Don made a presentation on antennas and distributed a detailed handout on the topic. Don's handout on the use of UHF/VHF antennas for disaster communications is available on Karoecho.net Documents page, Training page, and Operations page for easy access.

Howdy also demonstrated his go-kit and the use of SWR metering to determine antenna resonance frequencies. A GMRS gain antenna on a tripod was tested along with a Diamond x-500a on a 20' mast, and various homemade quarterwave verticals.